

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PRS-00 H-02  
SSM-05 PA-02 SS-15 SSO-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 PM-05  
EB-08 TRSE-00 /096 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH  
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND  
S/PRS - MR. CARTER  
H - MR. FLATEN  
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW  
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER  
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH  
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM  
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

-----068477 010004Z /70

O 282307Z FEB 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USMISSION SINAI  
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA  
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
USCINCEUR  
DOD  
JCS  
CIA  
USIA  
NSC

UNCLAS STATE 051823

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - FEBRUARY 28

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE  
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 28,  
1978. FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

Q. CAN YOU BRING US UP TO DATE ON ATHERTON'S TRAVELS,  
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WAS HE, FOR EXAMPLES, DISINVITED TO DAMASCUS?

A. LET ME SAY THIS, INsofar AS THE SPECIFIC QUESTION  
GOES, THE QUESTION OF A VISIT TO SYRIA WAS DISCUSSED WITH  
THE SYRIANS, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO THE  
DETAILS OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS. AT SOME APPROPRIATE  
TIME, THE POSSIBILITY OF A TRIP BY MR. ATHERTON TO SYRIA  
IS CERTAINLY NOT EXCLUDED. I WOULD SAY, HOWEVER, THAT  
HE HAS NO PRESENT PLANS TO GO TO DAMASCUS.

Q. WHERE IS HE ON THE SHUTTLE AND WHERE DOES HE GO NEXT?

A. I BELIEVE BACK TO CAIRO. HE SAID EITHER YESTERDAY OR  
THIS MORNING THAT HE WILL BE COMING BACK HERE EVENTUALLY,  
AHEAD OF MR.BEGIN, AND THAT OF COURSE, IS A LITTLE  
EARLIER THAN MID-MARCH. I DON'T HAVE HIS TRAVEL PLANS

BEYOND THAT RIGHT NOW.

Q. SO HE WILL BE COMING BACK HERE WITH OR WITHOUT AN  
AGREEMENT ON DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES?

A. YES, AND HIS RETURN IS ALREADY PREDICATED ON PRIME  
MINISTER BEGIN'S TRIP AND WILL NOT BE INDICATIVE OF  
ANYTHING ELSE.

Q. BACK ON SYRIA, TODAY, "TISHRIN," THE DAILY SYRIAN

PAPER SAID THAT MR. ATHERTON IS UNWELCOME IN SYRIA AND DAMASCUS BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES KNOWS WHERE THE ASAD ADMINISTRATION STANDS ON THE ISSUES. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ON IT?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THE SPECIFIC REMARKS IN THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE THAT YOU'RE CITING. I WOULD JUST OBSERVE THAT WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS SEEKING, AS WE HAVE BEEN RIGHT ALONG, IS A COMPREHENSIVE UNCLASSIFIED

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SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND WE HAVE BEEN, AND CONTINUE TO KEEP SYRIA INFORMED REGULARLY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. AND WITHOUT REGARD TO COMMENTS IN THE PRESS OR ELSEWHERE, WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT IN THE FUTURE SYRIA'S LEADERS WILL DECIDE IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO REJOIN THE OVERALL PEACE PROCESS.

Q. TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE UNITED STATES KEEP SYRIA INFORMED -- TO WHAT DEGREE OF DETAIL?

A. I'M NOT SURE OF THE DETAIL PRECISELY. I THINK THAT WE TRY TO KEEP THEM UP TO DATE ON THE GENERAL STAGE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH OUR AMBASSADORS.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, IF ROY WERE SPEAKING TO THE ISRAELIS OR THE EGYPTIANS, WOULD THE SYRIANS GET A REPORT ON THOSE CONVERSATIONS?

A. I DON'T THINK THEY WOULD GET A SPECIFIC RUN-DOWN ON THE PRECISE FORMULATION HE MIGHT BE CARRYING BACK AND FORTH. WHAT WE WOULD BE GIVING ORDINARILY WOULD BE OUR ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING AND WHAT WE THINK ARE THE REMAINING OBSTACLES, THAT SORT OF THING. I'M SURE THAT WE'RE NOT GIVING THIRD PARTIES FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO BRING BETWEEN TWO PARTIES.

Q. I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE QUESTION OF THE HAWK

MISSILES AT TABUK. NOW THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT THERE ARE MISSILES AT TABUK --

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A. I DON'T RECALL A DENIAL OF THERE BEING MISSILES AT TABUK.

Q. I ASKED YESTERDAY SPECIFICALLY ABOUT TABUK AND I

WAS GIVEN AN ANSWER THAT THERE WAS NO CREDENCE TO THAT REPORT.

A. NO. IN FACT, THE QUESTION THAT WAS POSTED WAS, WERE THERE SOME NEAR THE BORDER, AND THAT, BADLY TAKEN AS IT MAY HAVE BEEN WAS THEIR INTERPRETATION, SINCE THE RANGE OF THOSE MISSILES DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE LENGTH BETWEEN THE BORDER AND THAT BASE. BUT I WOULD, NONETHELESS, SAY THAT THE REASON THERE WAS QUICKLY ANOTHER ANSWER POSTED WAS THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL ESTABLISH THAT THERE WAS A HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, BUT NOT ON THE BORDER AND THAT WAS WHAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THE TAKEN QUESTION TO BE.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US AGAINST WHOM OR OF WHOM ARE THEY PROTECTING, SAUDI ARABIA, AT TABUK?

A. I HAVE NO IDEA. YOU'D HAVE TO ASK THE SAUDIS.

Q. BECAUSE SENATOR STONE YESTERDAY IN HIS SPEECH ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE SUGGESTED THAT THOSE MISSILES WERE SOLD TO SAUDI ARABIA SPECIFICALLY TO PROTECT THE OIL FIELDS, AND THE NEAREST OIL FIELDS TO TABUK ARE ABOUT 400 MILES AWAY.

A. BUT YOU'RE ASKING ME TO JUSTIFY WHAT A SENATOR SAID ON THE FLOOR ABOUT A DEFENSE MATTER, WHICH IS A SAUDI DEFENSE MATTER. I'M REALLY NOT IN A POSITION TO ANSWER THAT.

Q. WHAT IS THE RANGE OF THOSE MISSILES?

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A. I DON'T RECALL.

Q. ARE YOU SURE IT'S NOT 125 MILES?

A. I'VE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT THAT IS CORRECT. I AM NOT A DEFENSE DEPARTMENT EXPERT, UNFORTUNATELY, BUT THAT IS WHAT I WAS TOLD.

Q. ON THIS SAME ISSUE, SENATOR STONE'S OFFICE WAS POINTING OUT THAT WHEN THE HAWK MISSILES WERE SOLD TO JORDAN, IT WAS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ANY MOBILE CAPACITY, AND YET THE HAWK MISSILES SOLD TO SAUDI ARABIA APPARENTLY DO HAVE THAT MOBILE CAPACITY. WHY WAS THAT RESTRICTION NOT PLACED ON THE HAWK MISSILES SINCE IN FACT THEY HAVE NOW BEEN MOVED TO A LOCATION WHICH, IN MY UNDERSTANDING, IS 800 MILES FROM THE NEAREST OIL FIELDS?

A. I'M NOT SURE I KNOW WHY THE QUESTION ARISES.

Q. WELL, THE QUESTION ARISES BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY IF THEY ARE THERE TO PROTECT THE OIL FIELDS, THEN THERE IS NO NEED FOR THEM TO HAVE A MOBILE CAPACITY. WITH THE MOBILE CAPACITY THEY CAN VERY EASILY BE MOVED, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOW 100-125 MILES FROM THE ISRAELI BORDER.

A. I THINK THIS IS SORT OF A PROPAGANDA QUIBBLE, BUT WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY TO YOU IS THAT THEY DEFINE WHERE THE THREAT NECESSARILY WOULD HAVE TO BE AND FROM WHERE THE THREAT MIGHT COME TO THEIR OIL FIELDS WHY SHOULD THEY NOT HAVE MOBILE CAPACITY? I MEAN, I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE QUESTION ARISES. FROM WHAT POINT OF VIEW SHOULDN'T THEY HAVE THE MOBILE CAPACITY?  
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Q. WELL, I MEAN THE QUESTION ARISES I THINK FOR OTHER OBVIOUS REASONS BECAUSE IF THE HAWK MISSILES WERE SOLD TO THE SAUDIS FOR DEFENSE, LET'S SAY, AGAINST IRAQ, THAT WOULD BE ONE THING. IF THEY ARE SOLD TO THE SAU  
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## Message Attributes

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